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Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the International Conferences on Financing for Development

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017

Supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (A/71/534). During its consideration of the report, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses dated 9 November 2016.

2. According to the Secretary-General, the report was prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 70/248 C, in which the Assembly endorsed the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/70/883), including a request that the Secretary-General submit a comprehensive proposal that addresses the effective and efficient delivery of mandates in support of the 2030 Agenda for

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Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (the two Agendas) (A/71/534, para. 1).

3. In the report, it is stated that through ongoing dialogue with Member States, the Secretariat entities have identified the following areas where the need for Secretariat support has risen and where it can add the highest value: (a) providing support for the strengthening of capacity and improving the ability to work together at the regional, national, subnational and local levels; (b) facilitating regional and international cooperation; (c) catalysing new partnerships and improving the effectiveness and accountability of existing partnerships; (d) supporting a favourable international enabling environment through intergovernmental processes; (e) supporting ongoing review and renewal; (f) undertaking public advocacy for the Sustainable Development Goals; (g) providing support to inter-agency efforts; and (h) providing support to countries' efforts to develop strategies to finance the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (ibid., para. 11).

4. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that at present, some 100 United Nations country teams have been approached by Governments requesting assistance for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and in 2015 and 2016, more than 60 new United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks have been initiated and signed with Governments.

5. The Secretary-General indicates that a comprehensive overview of the related resource requirements is presented through the following three categories:

(a) Requirements related to the mandates from the Economic and Social Council, for which an appropriation is sought in the context of the report of the Secretary-General on the revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council during 2016 (A/71/401 and Add.1);

(b) Requirements related to the mandates in the two Agendas, for which revised estimates were previously presented in the report of the Secretary-General (A/70/589 and Corr.1);

(c) Requirements for the strengthening of the Development Account and the regular programme of technical cooperation as set out in the report of the Secretary-General (A/71/534, para. 34).

6. The observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee in respect of category (a) are contained in its report on the revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council during 2016 (A/71/633; see also para. 36 below), which should be read in conjunction with the present report. The recommendations of the Committee in relation to categories (b): Requirements related to the mandates in the two Agendas, for which revised estimates were previously presented in the report of the Secretary-General (A/70/589 and Corr.1) and (c): Requirements for the strengthening of the Development Account and the regular programme of technical cooperation, are set out below.

II. Category (b): Requirements related to the mandates in the two Agendas, for which revised estimates were previously presented in the report of the Secretary-General (A/70/589 and Corr.1)

7. In respect of the report of the Secretary-General (A/70/589 and Corr.1), the General Assembly, in its resolution 70/248 A, authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments for the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda, in an amount not exceeding $7,547,300 in the first year of the biennium 2016-2017. In the report (A/71/534), it is indicated that projected expenditures in this regard would amount to $6,142,600, for which an appropriation is being sought in the present report (ibid., table 22; see also para. 37 below).

8. In his report, the Secretary-General requests resources in the amount of $5,854,200 for 2017 for the implementation of the two Agendas, in respect of section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference services; section 9, Economic and social affairs; section 12, Trade and development; section 29D, Office of Central Support Services; and section 36, Staff assessment, of the programme budget (ibid., paras. 44 and 173 (c)).

Addis Ababa Action Agenda

9. With respect to the requirements for 2017 arising from the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, a total amount of $1,714,000 is proposed, comprising $37,600 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference services; $1,360,600 under section 9, Economic and social affairs; $106,500 under section 12, Trade and development; $95,400 under section 29D, Office of Central Support Services; and $113,900 under section 36, Staff assessment (ibid., table 4).

10. The amount of $37,600 proposed under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference services, would cover one pre-session document of 8,500 words to be issued in the six official languages (ibid., para. 46).

11. Under section 9, Economic and social affairs, the amount of $1,360,600 would provide for six temporary posts (1 P-5, 2 P-4, 2 P-3 and 1 General Service (Other level)), effective from 1 January 2017 ($946,200); consultants ($150,000); experts ($180,000); travel of staff ($65,000); contractual services ($14,000); general operating expenses ($2,400); and supplies and materials ($3,000). Modifications to external factors and outputs are also proposed under section 9 (ibid., paras. 53, 63 and 64, and table 6).

12. With respect to the proposed requirements for consultants under section 9, it is stated in the report that specialized expertise is required to provide analytical papers on the theme of the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up to serve as background to the expert group meeting; background papers to serve as input; the development of a communications strategy; and background studies (ibid., para. 57). In relation to the proposed six temporary posts, it is indicated in the report that one Economic Affairs Officer (P-4) would conduct policy analysis, research and technical advice on the annual theme of the

forum, including drafting background papers and concept notes, and one Economic Affairs Officer (P-3) would assist in developing a communications strategy. In addition, it is proposed that another Economic Affairs Officer (P-4) would prepare various reports, background papers and parliamentary documentation for the Secretary-General and the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters (ibid., paras. 55 (b) and (c) and 56 (a)). **In view of the overlap in some functions between the proposed temporary posts and consultants as described in the report of the Secretary-General, the Advisory Committee recommends a 20 per cent reduction in the proposed resources for consultants in the amount of $30,000, so that resources for consultants under section 9 would amount to $120,000.**

13. The proposed requirements for section 12, Trade and development ($106,500) would comprise $87,000 for consultants and $19,500 for travel of staff. It is indicated in the report that the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda would also require modifications under section 12 (ibid., paras. 73 to 75, and table 7). The amount of $95,400 under section 29D, Office of Central Support Services, general operating expenses, would cover the costs of central support services, including for the rental of premises to house six temporary posts located in New York. Under section 36, Staff assessment, the amount of $113,900 would provide for staff assessment resulting from the temporary posts proposed under section 9, Economic and social affairs, offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment (ibid., paras. 78 and 80).

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

14. It is stated in the report that the implementation of the additional mandates arising from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development would require total additional resource requirements for 2017 in the amount of $4,140,200 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management ($281,400); section 9, Economic and social affairs ($3,497,100); section 29D, Office of Central Support Services ($159,000); and section 36, Staff assessment ($202,700) (ibid., para. 81 and table 10).

15. With respect to section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, the amount of $281,400 would cover interpretation ($24,000), pre-session documentation ($210,400) and post-session documentation ($47,000) (ibid., table 11).

16. Under section 9, Economic and social affairs, the amount of $3,497,100 would comprise $1,643,600 for temporary posts (3 P-5, 4 P-4 and 2 P-3) effective from 1 January 2017; $88,500 for other staff costs; $497,500 for consultants; $670,000 for experts; $78,500 for travel of representatives; $295,000 for travel of staff; $215,000 for contractual services; $4,000 for general operating expenses; and $5,000 for supplies and materials. Modifications, including to outputs, are also proposed under section 9 (ibid., paras. 144-159 and table 13).

17. In the report, it is stated that the requirements for consultants under section 9, subprogramme 3, in the amount of $310,000, relate to specialized expertise for national reviews, the adaptation of guidance at the national level, training, tools development, policy analysis, development of case studies and best practices, as well as preparation of inputs to the *Global Sustainable Development Report*

(ibid., para. 117 (a) and (b)). Of the proposed four temporary posts, the report indicates that one Senior Sustainable Development Officer (P-5) would support the further elaboration of the guidelines for the national reviews and develop training materials and tools. One Sustainable Development Officer (P-3) would undertake analysis and research on specific thematic or new issues addressed in the *Global Sustainable Development Report* and support the drafting of some parts of the report, while other existing staff of the Policy and Analysis Branch would also contribute to the preparation of the report (A/71/534, paras. 112 (a) and 115). **Considering the duplication in some of the functions to be covered by the proposed temporary posts and consultants as indicated by the Secretary-General, and the existing capacity, the dvisory Committee recommends a 20 per cent reduction in the amount of $62,000 under consultants, which would result in resources for consultants in the amount of $248,000 under subprogramme 3 of section 9.**

18. It is also indicated that under subprogramme 4 of section 9, resources in the amount of $82,500 for consultants would provide for the development of new statistical methodologies, approaches, tools and techniques in a wide range of new areas and the development of new methodologies, approaches, tools and techniques in the area of geospatial information management (ibid., para. 133 (a) and (b)). In this regard, the Secretary-General also requests four temporary posts, including one Statistician (P-4) to support the methodological work of the global indicator framework in the new areas, and one Senior Statistician (P-5) to provide leadership in the use of geographic information. It is also indicated in the report that at present, there are two mid-level expert staff in the United Nations Statistics Division who support this work (ibid., para. 132 (b) and (d)). **In the light of the overlap of some of the functions to be performed by the proposed temporary posts and consultants as set out in the report of the Secretary-General, and the existing capacity, the Advisory Committee recommends a 20 per cent reduction in the amount of $16,500 under consultants, which would amount to total resources of $66,000 for consultants under subprogramme 4 of section 9.**

19. It is stated in the report that under section 29D, Office of Central Support Services, the amount of $159,000 would cover the costs of central support services, including for the rental of premises to house nine temporary posts and a general temporary assistance position located in New York. The amount of $202,700 under section 36, Staff assessment, would provide for staff assessment resulting from the temporary posts and general temporary assistance positions proposed under section 9, Economic and social affairs, offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment (ibid., table 19 and para. 164).

20. **Therefore, under category (b), the Advisory Committee recommends a total reduction in the amount of $108,500 for consultants under section 9 as detailed in paragraphs 12, 17 and 18 above. In this context, the Committee recalls its view that reliance on the use of external consultants should be kept to an absolute minimum and that the Organization should use its in-house capacity to perform core activities or to fulfil functions that are recurrent over the long term (A/70/7, para. 116). Taking this into account, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of resources in the amount of $5,745,700 under category (b) for requirements for 2017 related to the mandates in the two Agendas, as well as the proposed establishment of 15 temporary posts (4 P-5, 6 P-4, 4 P-3 and 1 General Service (Other level)), effective from 1 January 2017, under section 9, Economic and social affairs.**

III. Category (c): Requirements for the strengthening of the Development Account and the regular programme of technical cooperation

Development Account

21. In the report of the Secretary-General, it is stated that enabling countries to realize the 2030 Agenda requires a well-coordinated United Nations with a cross-sectoral approach, which calls for behavioural and cultural changes in the Organization. In order to incentivize these changes, the Secretary-General proposes that the Member States consider increasing the funding for the Development Account. It is indicated that the projects executed by the United Nations Secretariat implementing entities under the Development Account funding would be demand-driven and coordinated with relevant United Nations funds, programmes and/or specialized agencies, using human and technical capacities within developing countries, to the extent possible, including through South-South cooperation (A/71/534, paras. 22 and 24).

22. It is indicated that the approved resources in the amount of $28.4 million for the biennium 2016-2017 have been focused towards helping Member States to strengthen their capacity to generate, assemble and analyse data related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including $12 million dedicated to addressing the most urgent initial statistical needs related to the Sustainable Development Goals. The Secretary-General proposes an increase of $7.5 million for 2017 and a further additional $7.5 million for the biennium 2018-2019, amounting to a total of $15 million, to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The current appropriation for section 35, Development Account, in the current biennium 2016-2017 ($28,398,800) would therefore increase to $35,898,800 (a net increase of $7.5 million) and $43,398,800 (a further net increase of $7.5 million) in the biennium 2018-2019 (ibid., paras. 26, 27 and 165).

23. It is also proposed that the eligibility of the Development Account implementing entities be expanded beyond the current 10 to those listed under section VIII of the report, including any other entities to be included at the discretion of the Secretary-General. The Account is also proposed to be renamed as the "Sustainable Development Account", and the Steering Committee would include all the eligible entities (ibid., paras. 29 and 31). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that at present, the Development Account is under the overall supervision of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

24. It is stated in the report that the Secretary-General would continue to provide overall strategic and programmatic direction supported by the programme manager and the Steering Committee. It is further stated that projects would be selected on the basis of two criteria: (a) the proposals must prove their relevance to furthering the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda; and (b) preference will be given to projects to be undertaken in an integrated manner by more than one entity across sectors (ibid., paras. 28 and 30).

Regular programme of technical cooperation

25. It is indicated in the report that the regular programme of technical cooperation is demand-driven and is able to respond flexibly and on short notice to the specific requests of developing countries for small-scale but urgent requirements as defined by them. In order to respond to the growing demand of developing countries for policy advice and capacity-building, including regional and subregional advisory services, the Secretary-General proposes an increase to the funding to this programme in the amount of $5 million for 2017 and for 2018-2019. The current appropriation for section 23, Regular programme of technical cooperation ($54,763,400) would increase to $59,763,400 (net increase of $5 million) in the bienniums 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 (ibid., paras. 32, 33 and 165).

26. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that subject to approval by the General Assembly, the distribution of new resources among entities and type of activities will be determined in January 2017, following further consultation with the implementing entities for the regular programme of technical cooperation, based on needs expressed by Member States. The Committee was further informed that the 2018-2019 budget fascicle will also include information on the distribution of the new resources for 2017.

Observations and recommendations

27. The Secretary-General indicates that the present report replaces the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/70/794) on supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (A/71/534, para. 2). The Advisory Committee notes that in his previous report, the Secretary-General set out the proposed budgetary implications by budget section, distribution of proposed temporary posts by budget section and grade and distribution of proposed non-post objects of expenditure by budget section (A/70/794, tables 1-3). The Secretary-General also submitted supplementary information which provided detailed budgetary implications by budget section, component and object of expenditure for sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 27, 29F, 35 and 36 of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017. At that time, the Committee was informed upon enquiry that the report included proposals for additional resource requirements for the strengthening of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the regional commissions and the United Nations Development Account, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/247.

28. The Advisory Committee recalls that in its previous report, it noted with concern that the report of the Secretary-General was not a comprehensive proposal as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/247 and considered that the details in the supplementary information should have been included in the report itself. The Committee also recommended that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive proposal that addresses the effective and efficient delivery of mandates in support of the two Agendas, as requested by the Assembly in its resolution 70/247, and that takes into account the observations and comments of the Committee (A/70/883, paras. 10 and 20). The General Assembly

endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee in this regard in its resolution 70/248 C.

29. **The Advisory Committee notes that the present report of the Secretary-General submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 70/248 C does not address the Committee's concerns as endorsed by the Assembly in resolution 70/248 C, and instead presents a completely new proposal with a narrative that is different from the narrative in the previous report (A/70/794). It is unclear how the proposals in the previous report led to the present proposal, or how the present proposal takes into account the Committee's previous observations and comments.**

30. **The Advisory Committee also notes that the Secretary-General has not provided any information on how he intends to disburse the requested resources under sections 23 and 35. The proposal should have provided detailed information on the type of projects, the implementing entity and the amounts to be received by each implementing entity, for the consideration of the General Assembly prior to approval. The Committee considers that the present proposal would not provide Member States with sufficient oversight of the utilization of the related resources under the Development Account and regular programme of technical cooperation.**

31. **In this regard, the Advisory Committee recalls that in the context of the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General usually provides detailed information on the proposed resources for the Development Account and the regular programme of technical cooperation for the consideration of the General Assembly (see A/70/6 (Sect. 35), annex I, and A/70/6 (Sect. 23)). Such information should also have been provided in the present report for the consideration of the Assembly.**

32. **With respect to the proposals to expand the eligibility of the Development Account implementing entities and to rename the Development Account, as well as any other proposals related to the governance of the Development Account, the Committee considers that these are policy matters for the decision of the General Assembly.**

33. **In the light of the lack of information on the proposals relating to the Development Account and regular programme of technical cooperation, the Advisory Committee is not in a position at this stage to recommend approval of the related resource requirements.**

34. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to submit for the consideration of the Assembly, during the first resumed part of the seventy-first session, a comprehensive proposal that addresses the effective and efficient delivery of mandates in support of the two Agendas, taking into account the Committee's observations and comments. The Committee trusts that the report will include the information detailed in paragraph 35 below.**

IV. Other matters

35. The Advisory Committee enquired as to the administrative reporting lines and structure, as well as the project owner, for the implementation of the two Agendas. The Committee was informed that all Secretariat entities report to the Secretary-General, who is therefore ultimately accountable for the coordination of this effort. **The Advisory Committee considers this response to be insufficient and is of the view that the Secretary-General should provide more information on the organizational structure for the coordination of Secretariat activities in support of the implementation of the two Agendas, including information as to the governance structure within the Secretariat, the project owner, the reporting lines and the interaction with the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.**

V. Conclusion

36. Paragraphs 173 to 178 of the report contain the actions requested of the General Assembly. **Subject to its comments and recommendations above and in its report (A/71/633), the Advisory Committee sets out its recommendations below. With respect to the revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council during 2016, as detailed in the Committee's report (A/71/633), the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the proposed resources in the amount of $3,485,300, for which the related appropriation is being sought in the context of the reports of the Secretary-General (A/71/401 and Add.1).**

37. **The Advisory Committee also recommends approval of the appropriation in the amount of $6,142,600 in relation to the 2016 expenditures of the commitment authority approved by the General Assembly in resolution 70/248 A.**

38. **Concerning the requirements for 2017 related to the mandates in the two Agendas, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of appropriation in the amount of $5,745,700, taking into account its comments and recommendations in paragraphs 12, 17, 18 and 20 above.**

39. **In relation to the requirements for the strengthening of the Development Account and the regular programme of technical cooperation, the Advisory Committee recommends against approval of the proposed resources (see paras. 29-31, 33 and 34 above).**

40. **Regarding the proposed expansion of the eligibility of Development Account implementing entities and the proposed renaming of the Development Account, the Advisory Committee considers these to be policy matters for the decision of the General Assembly.**

41. **The Advisory Committee therefore recommends approval of appropriation in the total amount of $11,888,300 as indicated in paragraphs 37 and 38 above, which includes $607,200 required under section 36, Staff assessment, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, which is to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment. The Committee notes that the amount net of staff assessment of**

$11,281,100 would represent a charge against the contingency fund for the biennium 2016-2017.

42. **The Advisory Committee also recommends approval of the proposed establishment of 15 temporary posts (4 P-5, 6 P-4, 4 P-3 and 1 General Service (Other level)), effective from 1 January 2017, under section 9, Economic and social affairs.**

43. **The Advisory Committee will consider the related requirements for the biennium 2018-2019 in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019.**